

CAMP REYNOLDS, CHAPEL
(Building No. 74)
Angel Island State Park
Angel Island
Marin County
California

HABS CA-1841-F
CA-1841-F

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CAMP REYNOLDS, CHAPEL
(Fort McDowell - West Garrison, Building No. 74)

HABS No. CA-1841-F

Location: Angel Island, Marin County, California

Present Owner: State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation

Present Occupant: Angel Island State Park

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Camp Reynolds was established on Angel Island in 1863 to enhance the coastal defenses of San Francisco Bay during the Civil War. In 1866 Camp Reynolds became the army's general depot for receiving and distributing new recruits in the West. From the 1860s through the 1880s a village of wood frame buildings including a chapel, officers' quarters, barracks, and various support structures was constructed and expanded. Now part of Angel Island State Park, Camp Reynolds features a remarkable collection of surviving late-nineteenth-century army structures

Construction of this chapel with an attached school room dates to the expansion of Camp Reynolds in the mid-1870s. Establishment of recruit depot and a growing population of Army families on Angel Island created a need for community buildings such as this combined religious/education structure. The modest one-story building is also a good example of vernacular church architecture from the 1870s. The chapel is prominently located on a hill behind officers' row, a highly visible location overlooking the whole camp at a time before the site became overgrown.

I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1876
2. Architect: Not known
3. Original owner: U. S. Army, 1876 -1948
Subsequent owners: U. S. Department of the Interior, 1948-63
California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1963 - present
4. Builder: constructed and altered by soldiers stationed at Camp Reynolds/Fort McDowell

5. Original plans and construction:

The Camp Reynolds chapel, known as Saint Marie, partially retains its original 1876 form. The one story wood building was built with a prominent front gable chapel section with a steeple tower and a perpendicular wing on the side containing a school room. A February 1877 description listed the "post chapel and school-house" as an one-story twenty-two by forty foot main building for church purposes, capable of seating one hundred people, and an eighteen by twenty foot school-house. A January 1877 site plans shows the chapel in its present location on the ridge behind officers' row. The L-shaped footprint with a small tower entrance projection on the front shown on this map matches the current form of the building. A subsequent inspection report in 1879 both confirms the construction date and the dimensions of the building.¹

6. Alterations and additions:

Historic photographs and an 1893 drawing indicate that the roof of the chapel section was formerly more steeply pitched (Figure 1).² The entrance tower had a tall pointed steeple which has now been truncated to a small pyramidal cap. Other ecclesiastical decoration such as stained glass windows and crosses on top of the steeple and at the gable peak of the schoolhouse ell have been removed. The entire building became a schoolhouse in 1938 and perhaps these changes occurred then.³

Army documents also reveal additional changes to the windows in the chapel. In 1897 an inspection report noted that the chapel needed better ventilation because "the windows in the

¹National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), Cartographic and Architectural Branch, College Park, MD, RG 77, Real Estate Division, Drawing #1 with 1877 printed description attached; Camp Reynolds site plan, January 1877, NARA, Cartographic, RG 77, Fortification File, drawer 154, sheet 44-8; Inspection Report to Quartermaster General (30 June 1879), NARA, RG 92, Entry 225, Box 36, Folder 4.

²Enclosure to Special Sanitary Report, (30 June 1893), NARA, RG 112, Entry 41, Box 2.

³Historical Record of Public Buildings, Fort McDowell, Angel Island, Building No. 74, NARA, RG 77, Entry 393, Box 142, Folder 5. This structure changed from No. 36 to No. 74 on October 9, 1916 and from "Post Chapel" to "School House" on August 22, 1938.

building are permanently closed, hence there is no ventilation except through the opened doors.”⁴ Again in 1902 inspection reports discussed the need to render at least the upper portion of the chapel windows movable, since the stained glass windows were in a fixed position.⁵ Currently the chapel windows have a movable transom over a regular double hung sash, a change probably made in response to this problem although the exact date of the alteration is not known.

A c.1929 plan indicates that the bathroom was an outdoor privy attached to the end of the school ell.⁶ The current interior partitions for bathrooms are not indicated. It is uncertain exactly when these changes were executed.

B. Historical Context:

Camp Reynolds was established on the west side of Angel Island in 1863 to enhance the coastal defenses of San Francisco Bay during the Civil War. With the reorganization of the army at the end of the Civil War, the future of Camp Reynolds was initially in doubt. Angel Island maintained some coastal defense duties, but then in 1866 its primary purpose became processing recruits assigned to the Western plains forts. Military historian Edward Coffman describes the role of frontier constabulary as the primary mission of the late-nineteenth-century peacetime army. In 1870, 23,000 men or sixty-two percent of the regular army was assigned to the West, including the Pacific coast posts.⁷

Enlargement of the post to four permanent companies required construction of new buildings in 1874-76, including the chapel, four single officer's quarters, two barracks, non-commissioned officers' quarters, a headquarters building, and a new wing for the hospital.⁸ Additional quarters and barracks were built first. Then with these immediate needs met, the post now needed community buildings to encourage the village life of a peacetime army installation. Previously religious services were held in any available space. In 1870, an old hospital located three-quarters of a mile from the post was being used as a chapel. A report suggested that this building be moved for use as a “school,

⁴Letter to Quartermaster General from J.C. Breckinridge, Inspector General (29 July 1897) NARA, RG92, Entry 89, Box 1463, File No. 104871.

⁵Letter to Inspector General from Commanding Officer, Angel Island, (13 January 1902) NARA, RG 92, Entry 89, Box 3530, File No. 175404.

⁶Historical Record of Public Buildings, Fort McDowell, Angel Island, Building No. 74, (includes c. 1929 plan) NARA, RG 77, Entry 393, Box 142, Folder 5.

⁷Edward M. Coffman. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 254.

⁸Inspection Report to Quartermaster General (30 June 1879); Surgeon General's Office, (1875), 498.

library, chapel, etcetera, there being no suitable buildings at the post for such purposes.”⁹ An 1872 description of Angel Island compiled by Inspector General R. R. Marcy provides more information about the makeshift chapel and associated functions:

The old hospital on the northwest part of the island has the ward, 24 by 24 feet, fitted up as a chapel, with twenty benches, to accommodate two hundred persons. Rooms on the east end occupied by the chaplain as a studio, and the quarters (three rooms and kitchen) occupied by him as quarters. Cemetery on the hill, about five hundred yards southeast of officers' quarters, with an area of 75 by 120 feet, contains thirty-two graves. Ground inclosed with picket fence, and in good order.¹⁰

Research has not yielded any details regarding the construction of the chapel/schoolhouse in 1876. An 1874 list of proposed new buildings for Camp Reynolds included a twenty by twenty foot schoolhouse to cost \$487.11. A letter from Commanding Officer A. D. Nelson to Inspector General Davis that same year explained the need for a suitable schoolhouse given the presence of “about twenty” school-age children on Angel Island. An 1875 description of the post contained an account similar to the one above from 1872 regarding the use of the old hospital as a chapel.¹¹ Presumably the army authorized construction of a dual chapel/school structure sometime in 1875. The chapel was located on the hill behind officers' row, probably because of proximity to the existing graveyard.

In 1880 the Angel Island Guide described the post chapel:

To the south of the Officer's quarters, upon the hill and overlooking the garrison is situated 'St. Marie' Chapel, erected in 1876 upon a location selected by the Rev. James O. Raynor, Post Chaplain. It contains several beautiful memorial stained glass windows, donated principally by the officers and soldiers of the 12th Infantry. Attached to the chapel is a school room for the children of the post, which is in session daily. Divine services are held every Sunday, commencing at 10:30 AM, Sunday school

⁹Surgeon General's Office. *War Department Circular No. 4 A Report on Barracks and Hospitals with Descriptions of Military Posts*. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1870), 441.

¹⁰Inspector General R. R. Marcy *Outline Descriptions of the Posts and Stations of Troops in the Geographical Divisions and Departments of the United States*. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1872), 279.

¹¹“Case of Proposed New Buildings at Angel Island, Cal.,” (1 September 1874) NARA, RG 92, Entry 225, Box 36, Folder 4; Letter to General W. H. Davis, Inspector General from A. D. Nelson, Lieut. Colonel, 12th Infantry, Commanding (12 June 1874); Surgeon General's Office. *Circular No. 8 - A Report on the Hygiene of the U.S. Army, Descriptions of Military Posts*. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1875), 498.

immediately afterwards.¹²

The presence of a chapel at a nineteenth-century army post was fairly unusual. According to military historian Edward Coffman, only about a third of all army posts had a chaplain, usually assigned the rank of captain. The army officially supported religion at its posts, but most of the men were not religious. Coffman also explains that:

Another reason which was advanced in this period for the lack of success in many chaplains' endeavors was the belief that these ministers did not proportionately represent the denominations of the men. A captain testified before Congress in 1876 that 'nearly all privates' were Catholics and that there should be more priests in the chaplaincy.¹³

In this period, less than six percent of all army chaplains were Catholic priests. The majority - fifty-eight percent - were Episcopalian ministers.¹⁴ This religious difference between the typical chaplain and enlisted men may explain the decision to name a non-denominational chapel "Saint Marie."

The school room at the Camp Reynolds chapel was also fairly unusual in a period when the army was inconsistent about providing post schools for the children. When a school was established, the chaplain usually served as the teacher, and his priority would be to educate illiterate enlisted men or their children. Enlisted men were required to send their children to the post school. Officers could choose to pay for their children to attend the post school. Typically officers' children were educated by a mix of tutors, post schools, public schools, boarding school, or their parents.¹⁵

II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General statement:

1. Architectural character: The Camp Reynolds chapel is an interesting example of a multipurpose Army chapel building from the 1870s. The building still retains many historic features.

¹²*Angel Island Guide*, (April 1880), 2, copy in Angel Island State Park files.

¹³Coffman, 390-391.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 392.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 323.

2. Condition of fabric: Fair. The chapel has been vacant since the 1940s, but appears to be structurally sound. There is cracking and settling damage to some of the walls and ceiling.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Overall dimensions: 42 feet 7 1/4 inches by 45 feet 5 inches
2. Foundations: The chapel has a concrete pier foundation with wood lattice between the piers. Army records show that over \$20,000 was spent in 1940 to replace the underpinning and foundation.¹⁶
3. Walls: Exterior walls are sheathed with six-inch-wide wood weatherboards all currently painted white. Army records refer to this exterior wall material as cove rustic siding.
4. Structural system: Exposed portions of the framing system indicate a light wood frame with a common rafter roof. Historic plans indicate the use of two foot by six inch joists and two by four inch studs.¹⁷
5. Porches, stoops: There are two five-step concrete stoops with pipe railings-one for each entrance (chapel and schoolhouse) on the north elevation. These appear to be early twentieth century replacements.
6. Chimneys: There is one internal brick chimney located at the wall junction between the chapel and schoolhouse spaces.
7. Openings:
- a. Doorways and doors: This structure has two exterior doorways, both located in the north elevation. The chapel doorway is more prominent, located in an entrance tower on the west bay of the three-bay chapel section. The opening is topped by a wood pediment with corner supporting brackets. The double wood doors each have two unequal rectangular recessed panels, the larger panel on top. The schoolhouse doorway has a plain, flat frame and the door is no longer extant.

¹⁶Historical Record of Buildings, NARA, RG 77, Entry 393, Box 142, Folder 5.

¹⁷Historical Record of Buildings, NARA, RG 77, Entry 393, Box 142, Folder 5.

- b. Windows and shutters: The chapel section has a tall window openings that used to have fixed stained glass panes. Now these openings have a small rectangular transom at the top and double hung sash one over windows with a small decorative ogee curve at the bottom corners of the upper sash. There are flat, plain window frames with a small projecting sill. There are two diamond-shaped window openings in this section - one in the north gable and another on the south elevation, or the pulpit end of the building. The north gable diamond window has an applied molding surround. A rectangular louvered opening appears in the south gable and the upper section of the entrance tower. The schoolhouse ell has six over six double hung sash windows in plain flat frames. The single window in the west gable of the schoolhouse has a transom and a bracketed pediment similar to the chapel entrance.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof form is L-shaped cross gable. The roof is covered with sheets of tar paper that replaced wood shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: This building has shallow box cornices with returns at the gable ends. There are no gutters.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Building No. 74 is basically a two-room structure with one large space for the chapel and another schoolroom space in the side ell. The south side of the schoolroom is partitioned into two bathrooms. A small entrance vestibule is located in the tower.
2. Stairways: This one-story structure has no interior stairways.
3. Flooring: This building has tongue and groove wood flooring of uniform width throughout. The floorboards are oriented east to west.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The chapel area has a replacement wallboard ceiling and walls over vertical beaded wood wainscotting approximately three feet high. The schoolroom area has plaster on lath walls with wood crown molding over vertical beaded wood wainscotting approximately four feet high. The schoolroom ceiling is tongue and groove wood paneling. Inside the entrance vestibule is vertical wood

wainscotting with horizontal tongue and groove wood paneling above. The partition wall creating the schoolroom bathrooms is made of wider vertical beaded wood planks.

All of the wainscotting is currently painted a tan color but originally stained dark brown. All of the wainscotting had a decorative cap molding although this molding has been removed in the chapel. In addition portions of the chapel wainscotting were cut away when blackboards were installed to convert this space in an additional schoolroom in 1938. The chapel has a taller baseboard with an applied cap molding while the schoolroom has a plain, flat baseboard.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The interior doors from the chapel to the school room or entrance tower are recessed panel wood doors with two tall vertical rectangles over two smaller ones characteristic of the late nineteenth century. The chapel and entrance tower side of these openings have a thick bead molding while plain, flat door molding surrounds the schoolroom doorways. Early-twentieth-century doors with five recessed horizontal panels and plain frames are located in the schoolroom leading to the bathrooms.

b. Windows: The typical interior window molding is a plain flat molding with a short projecting sill. There are roller shades or roller shade hardware on the windows.

6. Decorative features: There is a wood altar platform at the south end of the chapel area which is two-steps high on three sides and formerly attached to the south wall on the fourth.

7. Hardware: Damage to the windows and doors has removed most of the historic hardware. There are some surviving early twentieth century doorknobs and window hardware including the rods and hinges used to move the transoms.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, ventilation: Heat was provided by coal-burning stoves sharing the chimney located in the partition wall between the chapel and schoolroom. The stove hearth in the schoolroom is still

surrounded by a metal pipe safety railing. The stove has been disconnected and moved into one of the bathrooms.

b. Lighting: Army records show that electric wiring and light fixtures were installed in 1918.¹⁸ Several early twentieth century pendant ceiling fixtures are still extant in the original schoolroom.

c. Plumbing: The bathrooms have porcelain toilets that probably date to the early twentieth century.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: The chapel is prominently located on a hill behind officers' row, a highly visible location overlooking the whole camp at a time before the site became overgrown.

2. Outbuildings: There are no outbuildings. The remnants of a metal swingset probably date from a 1930s playground.

III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings: See notes for references to architectural sketches and site plans.

B. Early Views: Several late nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs including Building No. 74 are available in the Angel Island State Park files. The earliest seems to be from the 1880s.

C. Bibliography:

See notes for a listing of relevant archival materials from Record Groups 92, 77, and 112 at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC and College Park, Maryland.

Angel Island Guide, (April 1880), copy in Angel Island State Park files.

Coffman, Edward M. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Hoagland, Alison K. "Village Constructions: U.S. Army Forts on the Plains, 1848-1890,"

¹⁸Historical Record of Buildings, NARA, RG 77, Entry 393, Box 142, Folder 5.

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Wood, Robert M. "Preliminary Recommendation for the Interior Restoration of the Buildings Remaining on West Garrison," typescript, Angel Island State Park files.

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Camp Reynolds was documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS, Paul Dolinsky, Chief) (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, HABS/HAER/HALS Division, E. Blaine Cliver, Chief) during summer and fall 2002. The project was sponsored by the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, Rusty Areias, Director; and by Angel Island State Park, Nick Franco, Superintendent. Field recording and measured drawings were completed by Mark Schara, HABS Architect and Project Supervisor; HABS Architect Kathy Falwell; and Architects Paul Davidson (Pratt Institute) and Jonathan Eggert (University of Michigan). HABS Historian Lisa Pfueller Davidson served as project historian. HABS Photographer James Rosenthal completed large format photographs during fall 2002. Assistance was provided by the Staff of Angel Island State Park and Marin District Historian Marianne Hurley. See related documentation, HABS No. CA-2721, Fort McDowell, for information about the East Garrison portion of the island.

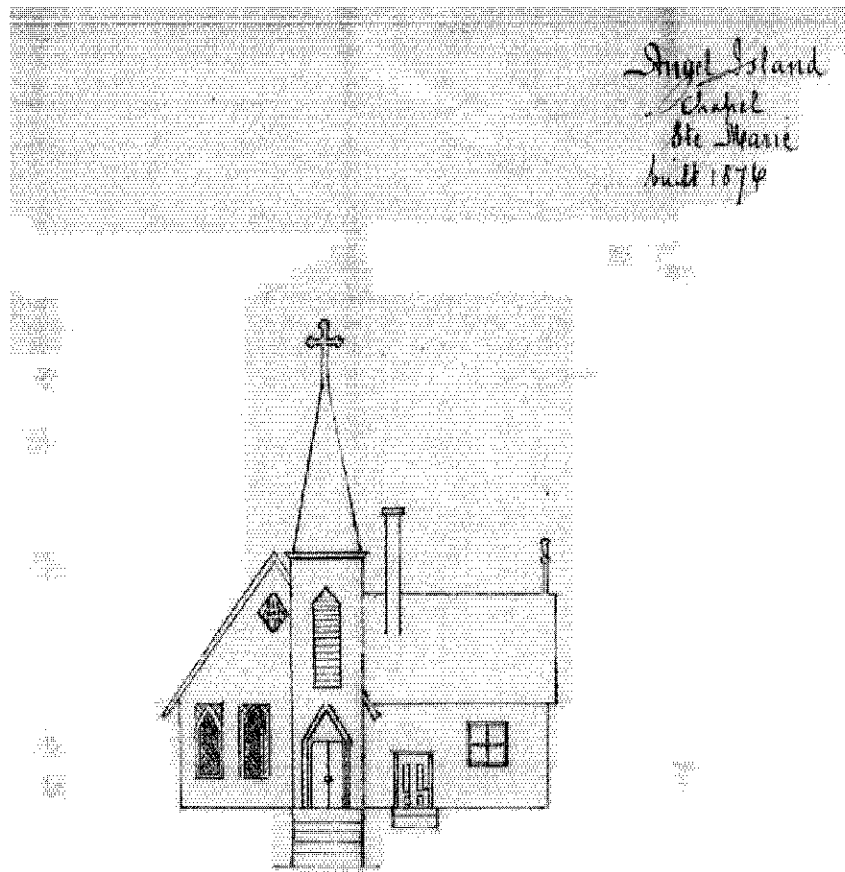


Figure 1: Elevation, Camp Reynolds Chapel, 1893

Source: Enclosure to Special Sanitary Report, (30 June 1893),
National Archives, RG 112 - Office of the Surgeon General, Entry 41, Box 2